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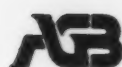
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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses issues of concern to trustees of public, single-campus four-year institutions of higher education. Seven critical issues are listed: (1) enrollment trends are changing--although overall enrollment is increasing, the rate of growth is declining and there has been a shift from four-year and graduate institutions to two-year institutions; (2) college and university costs have outpaced revenues and there has been a reduction in constant dollars in institutional revenues; (3) the financial aid structure has changed, with loans now accounting for more than half of total student financial aid; (4) there is increased regulation of higher education by government and institutions are generally expected to absorb the increased cost imposed by such legislation; (5) the physical plant of colleges and universities is deteriorating, with half rating rehabilitation needs as urgent; (6) public colleges and universities must increasingly look to private, external fund raising to meet mounting financial pressures; (7) technology is also increasing the cost of education; and (8) institutions are increasingly involved in international activities, driven both by economic and social forces. A second section of the paper sets out an agenda for a later seminar. (Contains 12 references.) (CH)

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Association of Governing Boards
of Universities and Colleges



**Perspectives on the Current Status of
and Emerging Policy Issues for
Single-Campus Public
Institutions**

By Kenneth P. Mortimer

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper is divided into two basic sections. The first part identifies seven issues that are of fundamental concern to trustees of single campus public, four-year institutions. The second section devotes some attention to four issues that may serve as discussion topics at the January 1991 seminar.

The seven issues of general significance are listed below:

1. National data show that the decades of the 1950's and 1960's were characterized by enrollment growth, but that the rate of growth declined in the 1970's. Enrollment levels stabilized in the 1980's, but the mix of enrollments changed with increasing participation by females, an increasing dominance of the public sector and declining participation by certain minority groups.
2. It is difficult for campuses to prepare for the interaction effects of enrollment instability, reduction of support (in constant dollars) and economic recession.
3. Increases in financial aid have increased student access, especially among low- to middle-income students.
4. The deterioration of physical plant constitutes a serious problem.
5. Efforts by public institutions to raise private funds are increasing.
6. The cost of teaching and research is related to the increased cost of obtaining and transmitting new knowledge.
7. There are expectations that institutions become increasingly involved in international and economic development activities.

The second major section of the paper attempts to set the stage for more detailed debates for the January 1991 seminar.

1. The condition of the professoriate is confounded by a decline in the real purchasing power of faculty salaries, increased retirement rates and a perceived loss of faculty power.
2. The variability in governing board effectiveness is an important factor in institutional success.

3. The new context of traditional debate about institutional autonomy and external accountability has endangered the basic academic core.
4. The discussion of access vs. quality is characterized by confusion over different conceptions of quality and how much society is willing to pay to develop human talent to its fullest potential.

INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to estimate exactly how many of the nation's approximately 500 four-year public colleges and universities have a single campus. In 1987 about 75 percent of all enrollments were in public higher education and almost 5 million of the 12 million students (42 percent) were enrolled in public four-year institutions (Kerr and Gade).

This paper will discuss policy issues in public higher education in general. It makes specific reference to single campus institutions where appropriate and omits system-level multi-campus governance issues.

A holistic framework for the consideration of governance-related issues in single campus institutions must, however, be aware of the fact that levels of governance external to the campus may have a crucial impact on internal matters. For example, federal policy sets financial aid levels, regional factors affect accreditation practices and state policies determine funding levels. In about half the states, a state-wide governing board sets policies while in almost all of the other half a coordinating board has varying degrees of influence over campus decisionmaking.

Within the institution, separate schools and/or colleges may govern academic programs like engineering, business, and social work. In addition, institutions are fractionated internally by faculty loyalties to their academic departments and/or disciplines. Large institutions may have 15 to 20 schools and colleges and over 100 academic departments.

Scholars often describe this confusing collage of administrative authority overlaying a basic structure of academic control over teaching and research activities as confusing, contradictory and in conflict. Academics often refer to the "Benefits of Disorder" in defending the structure's effectiveness in protecting the individual autonomy of faculty to teach and study in an atmosphere that encourages creativity and freedom.

The process of campus governance then, takes place in a peculiar culture. Goal conflict and ambiguity are common among various internal groups of faculty, staff, students and administrators. The technologies of the academy are problematic but demand a highly professional staff. The professionalism of the staff tends to be a fragmenting rather than unifying influence. In short, the particular pattern of influence and authority is likely to be based on political or collegial bases. There are limitations on the extent to which hierarchy and administrative authority explain internal governance patterns.

This paper is divided into two basic parts. The first identifies seven issues of concern when considering the nature of campus governance issues. This section is based heavily on a paper prepared with Michael Dooris and has been slightly modified for this presentation (Dooris and Mortimer, 1988). Sources for the data cited are available in that paper. The second major section identifies four issues that I have chosen to discuss more fully -- academic personnel, governing board effectiveness, accountability/autonomy and access/quality. It is my hope that discussions of the seminar in January 1991 will illuminate these issues more fully.

I. SEVEN ISSUES

Enrollment Trends

The 1950's and 1960's were decades of rapid enrollment growth. The 1970's brought continuing increases but declining rates of growth, while enrollments stabilized in the 1980's.

During the 1960's total higher education enrollment in the United States doubled, from about four million students in 1960 to just over eight million students in 1969. By comparison, total enrollments went from about 8.6 million in 1970 to 11.6 million in 1979, an increase of about one-third. During the 1980's, enrollments essentially reached a plateau -- total enrollments nationally exceeded 12 million students for the first time in 1980, and ranged from 12 to 12.8 million throughout the 1980's. So while enrollments continued to grow after 1980, the rate of growth continued to decline substantially.

Student mix (by gender and ethnicity) and enrollments by institutional type have changed. Some of these changes have been sudden and, recalling the conventional wisdom of past analyses, many have been surprising.

It was not until 1978 that the number of female students equaled the number of male students. Just ten years earlier, men had accounted for 60 percent of total enrollments. Also, from 1967 to 1988, the share of enrollments accounted for by part-time students rose from 31 percent to 43 percent. In addition, ethnic composition is changing significantly, with White and Black enrollments growing more slowly than total enrollments, and Asian and Hispanic enrollments growing vigorously. However, enrollment rates of racial and ethnic minorities remain a particular concern. In 1988, about 28 percent of White 18- to 24-year-olds entered higher education, compared to 21 percent of Blacks and 17 percent of Hispanics.

Different sectors of higher education have experienced different patterns of enrollment growth. Over the past 25 to 30 years, "market share" has shifted from four-year and doctoral institutions to two-year institutions, and from the private sector to the public sector. In 1963, two-year institutions accounted for about 18 percent of total enrollments; by 1988, two-year institutions accounted for about 38 percent of the total enrollments. In 1963, private institutions enrolled 36 percent of students in the U.S.; by 1988, private institutions accounted for 23 percent of enrollments.

In sum, the overall enrollment trend since the early 1960's has been growth. Rates of growth, however, have been very different in the 1960's, 1970's, and 1980's, and the experiences of various sectors and sub-populations have likewise differed. In the past ten to fifteen years, some institutions experienced decline, but a more "average" experience has been either stability or slight growth in enrollments.

Economics and State Appropriations

During the same period that enrollment growth was leveling off, public colleges and universities shared the sting of the general economic malaise of the 1970's -- inflation, recession, and unemployment -- with costs outpacing revenues during those years. Higher education in general fell behind inflation in the early- to mid-1970's, and in more recent years essentially has been staying in place. A number of analysts have shown a clear slowing in the growth of institutional revenues between 1973 and 1982, particularly in the public sector. More recent data show that nationally over the past nine years, overall state appropriations per student have just about kept pace with inflation as measured by the Higher Education Price Index, although there has been great individual variation among the states.

The real difficulty for many campuses was that the enrollment changes -- for which there had been ample warning -- were compounded in the early 1970's by the worst economic recession in forty years. It was difficult if not impossible for campuses to prepare for the interaction effects of enrollment instability or decline, reduction in constant dollars in institutional revenues, and severe economic recession.

Some observers are concerned that similar conditions are recurring as we enter the decade of the 1990's.

Financial Aid

The declining rate of enrollment growth was accompanied by a massive growth in financial aid which began in the 1960's. Total financial aid from federal, state and institutional sources rose from about a half-billion dollars in 1964 to over \$21 billion in 1986. Even in inflation-adjusted dollars, aid grew rapidly during the 1960's and 1970's (e.g., a tenfold increase between 1964 and 1976) -- before falling by three percent from 1981 to 1986.

The mix of grants versus loans also changed dramatically over this period. From 1964 through 1976, loans accounted for between 17 and 21 percent of total aid annually; by 1987, loans accounted for 50 percent of total aid. In constant dollars, federal loan

(Guaranteed Student Loan) amounts per student have about held steady over the past twenty-five years, but major grants; e.g., Pell Grants, have declined on a per student basis.

In addition to changing financial aid policies there have been changes in the relationship between tuition, income and financial aid. In 1989-90, tuition rates outpaced inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, for the eighth straight year. Tuition has risen a bit more rapidly for private than public institutions in recent years; from 1978 through 1989, tuition and fees rose at an average rate of eight percent for four-year public institutions, and by nine percent at private institutions. However, tuition and financial aid have been intertwined to the extent that by 1988, higher education had "become a discount business, with fewer and fewer people paying the sticker price as the price climbs".

How does financial aid affect access to higher education? Integrating a number of studies, Leslie and Brinkman (1988) found indications that the low-income population does not participate to the extent of middle- and high-income students, and that low-income students are under-represented in high cost, prestigious institutions. Nonetheless, they concluded that, overall, student aid does increase access, and that aid has been responsible in part for the increased enrollment of low- to middle-income students in recent years.

External Regulations

The past twenty years have seen more and more regulation of colleges and universities. This may be due to a general decline in confidence in public officials and a growing clamor for accountability, public and legislative dissatisfaction with the skyrocketing growth in higher education budgets in the 1960's and early 1970's, and the argument that coordination and regulation can help eliminate waste and duplication among a state's colleges and universities.

The increased regulation of higher education by government can be illustrated by reference to several requirements mandated by federal and state agencies. In 1972 an executive order mandated affirmative action searches. A later executive order extended rights of access to buildings for physically disabled persons. The 1970's also saw a spate of public employee collective bargaining laws.

More recently, state governments have moved to establish institutional assessment requirements. As of 1988, 24 states required programs to assess what college students learn, and another 12 were debating whether to implement such programs. Generally, institutions are expected to absorb the increased costs

imposed by such legislation. This raises the issue of the extent to which state rather than federal regulation is increasing at a more rapid pace.

Physical Deterioration

As colleges and universities struggled with the exigencies of the past two decades, one successful short-term coping mechanism was to defer the maintenance of physical facilities. The long-term dangers of this are only now beginning to surface. According to a 1987 study, among the most serious, and least recognized, of the problems currently facing institutions of higher education is the condition of their physical plants. Among the campuses included in that study, over half rated rehabilitation needs as extremely urgent or very urgent, with similar responses on the need for new construction or additions. One-third of the respondents planned on spending \$25 million or more on new construction in the coming five-year period.

A 1988 report placed a \$70 billion price tag on needed renovations to the nation's college and university buildings. Urgent repair needs alone were estimated at about \$20 billion. The same report stated that colleges and universities defer about \$4 in maintenance for every \$1 they spend, with the net effect that the backlog of repairs is growing. In short, facilities are deteriorating faster than they can be repaired. Such reports draw a discouraging picture of severely needed rehabilitation and new construction of classrooms, laboratory and research facilities, and office buildings.

Private Fundraising

Colleges and universities have increasingly been looking to external fund-raising to cope with mounting financial pressures. Voluntary support has outpaced both inflation and expenditure growth in recent years. While independent colleges and universities have traditionally depended more heavily than the public sector on voluntary support, public institutions are now pursuing private gifts more and more aggressively. Several public universities have completed private fundraising campaigns involving two to three hundred million dollars.

The Cost of Knowledge

Simmons notes that the cost of education has been driven by explosions of knowledge and sophisticated technology, and by the concomitant need to keep pace on a much faster track. "The nature of higher education is as different from that of two, three or four

decades ago as the computer is from the abacus...You no longer can teach laboratory science with Bunsen burners. This is the day of the electron microscope, the ultra-centrifuge, the high-performance liquid chromatograph, and of computers." Even library research has been revolutionized over the past decade, with the advent of computer networks and databases, electronic bibliographic systems, and sophisticated personnel able to use these resources. A labor- and capital-intensive infrastructure of people, facilities, utilities, insurance, and so on, are needed to support up-to-date instructional and research programs.

Internationalization and Economic Development

A recently emerging literature points out the blossoming involvement of universities in international and applied, often commercially oriented activities, such as joint ventures with foreign governments and business, contract research for both industry and government, and economic development. From 1976 to 1986, industrial funding was by far the fastest growing component of funded research for large research universities. During those years, industrial funding grew at three times the rate of research sponsored by federal, state or local governments.

Efforts to become involved in international activities may range from agricultural development projects and teaching English as a second language to formal agreements with cooperating institutions all over the world. While the merits and dangers of commercialization are open to debate, it is clear that the involvement of colleges and universities in commercial ventures is being driven by vigorous economic forces. This involvement is both a response by colleges to changing societal expectations and needs, and a way for institutions to cope with the increasingly difficult financial considerations with which they have been confronted.

II. FOUR ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

The Professoriate

The condition of the professoriate is a subject of national concern as we move into the 1990's (Schuster, 1990). Several trends in recent years are of concern:

- The real income of faculty has declined sharply over the last two decades. Some estimates claim the loss to inflation is as high as twenty percentage points.
- The faculty's voice in campus governance has been diluted as the focus appears to have shifted towards management-minded administrators and a host of external agencies.
- Some faculties have found themselves stuck by the stagnant labor market of the 1970's and 1980's.
- There are serious shortages of faculty in certain high demand areas of business, engineering and some sciences.

In contrast, evidence indicates that the 1990's and beyond will be a time of serious faculty shortages. The professorate doubled in size in the 1960's and many of those faculty members are now approaching retirement age. Several examples have been cited:

- The Minnesota State University system estimates it will replace approximately 70 percent of its faculty in the next 15 years.
- The California estimates are that approximately 64% percent of its faculty will have to be replaced over the next 12 years.
- Bowen and Schuster estimate that 180,000 replacements will have to be made in the 1990's, most in the second half of the decade.

After completing a national study of higher education faculty in four-year institutions, we issued a series of recommendations to manage academic personnel more effectively (Mortimer, Bagshaw and Masland, 1985). Among them were:

- Develop a three- to five-year perspective on faculty staffing issues.
- Maintain good data on the cost of various staffing strategies.
- Link personnel and fiscal affairs so that use of part-time faculty can be part of a total institutional philosophy.
- Manage entry to the tenure track carefully since a tenure commitment may bind the institution for 30 to 40 years.
- Allocate resources for faculty development and growth. An informed and vital faculty is an institution's most valuable capital asset.

Governing Board Effectiveness

There are several sources for advice on board operation and effectiveness available from the Association of Governing Boards (AGB). Single campus public four-year institutions have several characteristics worth noting:

- Board size is likely to be manageable -- from seven to ten members.
- Most trustees are appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate.
- The care that is taken in these appointments will vary widely from state to state and from campus to campus.
- Each board is unique in its operating culture and effectiveness.

A board of seven to ten members gives a President the opportunity to build a personal relationship with each member. Committees are likely to be smaller and have overlapping memberships. Finally, trustees can get to know each other and develop some sense of personal knowledge of the other trustees' position on the issues.

AGB studies of the appointment of trustees show that most governors do not screen or otherwise recruit trustees with a demonstrated interest in or commitment to higher education. One governor reported he had 1700 governmental appointments to make. He also reported that many of his political supporters would kill to get on the research university boards, but that often he had to persuade people to serve on the less prestigious boards. Occasionally, trustees may be appointed as a political favor with little or any regard given to whether the person is qualified to serve (Association of Governing Boards, 1980).

Kerr and Gade offer a typology of board involvement in the life of the institution which offers a view of the extent to which boards vary in their operation. The typology is built around the degree of board participation in the life of the institution and is linked to a normative evaluation of board performance. The fifth type - overall policy and governing board - tends to be the most effective according to Kerr and Gade.

- The out-to-lunch board is a rubber stamper of presidential initiatives.
- The external cosmetic board is composed of big names, but is only marginally involved in policy making.
- The ratifying, reviewing board pays attention to business, but gives its pro forma approval most of the time.
- The selected policy and performance board may choose certain issues (e.g., agriculture, religion) for major attention.
- The overall policy and performance board gives more or less equal attention to all major aspects of policy and performance.
- The plural and presiding board shows some concern, but in a more participatory and perhaps detailed way.
- The emergency participative board enters deeply into specific situations, especially in student or financial crises situations.
- The selective administrative board gets involved in details of interest to some or most of its members (e.g., athletics).

- The managerial board handles across-the-board details regularly.

A second aspect of the typology is built on how a board conducts its internal relations. This dimension is based on a continuum ranging from captive boards which respond directly to gubernatorial "suggestions" to consensual boards which are balanced by the views of its members to boards which are fractionated by individual members.

Autonomy/Accountability

The term autonomy tends to be regarded as an absolute; if you have less of it, somehow you are perceived to be worse off than if you have more of it. More typically, however, the debate about campus and/or institutional autonomy in the public sector is about the appropriate balance between the state's legitimate need to represent the public interest and an institution's legitimate concern to preserve those elements of its academic objectives that are crucial to preserving appropriate professional judgment.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's Report (1986), has noted that there is in the control of higher education an inherent tension. Colleges and universities are expected to respond to the needs of the society of which they are a part -- while also being free to carry on, without undue interference, their essential work.

The basic thesis presented here is that the ever-increasing role of outside agencies in campus matters is gradually wearing down internal governance structures.

There are a number of forces which lead me to conclude that the autonomy-accountability debate currently is cast in different terms than it was in the 1960's and 1970's, and even the early 1980's, although there are some forces that seem to be with us continually.

First, we have always had debates about fiscal accountability and pressures to manage our resources more efficiently. I do not regard this to be as terribly different, although sometimes it is more intense as you move from state to state.

Second, we continue to experience discussions about whether the structural qualities of a coordinating board or a state agency should be revised in such states as Maryland, Massachusetts, California, Texas and New Jersey.

Of greater concern to us are four other issues which will vary from time to time, but now combine to put the autonomy-accountability issue in the spotlight.

The first is the presence of aggressive governors and legislators in a variety of states. Many state officials appear to want to give increased support to higher education, but they are demanding some response on the part of institutional leaders as a "price" for their support. The quid pro quo may be better plans for assessment, more responsiveness to demands for financing the state's competitiveness and/or greater links to economic development.

Second, there is increased concern about the status of minority populations in a variety of states. We are coming to realize that 15 years of open admissions and/or increased access and affirmative action has not made the progress that we hoped would occur. Some minority participation rates are regressing and the diversity of faculty and staff has not improved much. In addition, the emerging fact of "minority/majority" populations is a cause of great concern, particularly in the southeast, southwest and western sections of the country.

Another issue that tends to spotlight the debate is the assumption that the university can be a critical ingredient in the economic development of the state. A number of observers believe that this link to economic development is crucial to additional support for universities, but it does call on a new era of responsiveness. I am not sure we fully understand what this responsiveness entails, and frankly, I am quite worried that we might eventually be charged with aiming higher than we can shoot.

Finally, there is new pressure for accountability from the states and the public for higher education to prove (demonstrate) effectiveness in our educational efforts. From 1983 to 1984 I chaired the Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in Higher Education. One of our major recommendations was in support of more effective forms of assessment. I am pleased that approximately half of the states have appointed study groups and/or commissions to look into educational effectiveness and how institutions can be stimulated to pay more attention to the education they provide students.

These incentives take the form of incentive funding schemes in a number of states -- New Jersey, Ohio, Tennessee, Florida and other states. I do not regard these incentives to be examples of intrusion, but I understand how they can become subjects of controversy in this basic series of discussions.

I don't come newly to this debate about institutional autonomy and accountability, since I have written extensively about this topic in my previous life as a Professor of Higher Education and Public Administration. In 1976 I edited a series of essays on Faculty Bargaining, State Government and Campus Autonomy. One of the essential issues being discussed at that time was whether the collective bargaining experience in large public systems would result in serious intrusions by the state into a campus' essential core. I concluded from that and other analyses that collective bargaining increased the amount of bureaucracy at the state level, and there were substantive issues to be resolved. I did not think, however, that a strong case could be made that there had been severe intrusions into academic freedom and/or basic institutional freedoms as a result of collective bargaining in public colleges and universities.

I also participated in a variety of other studies on the general topic of administration and interaction with external agencies when I dealt with the selection of trustees (79-80), retrenchment policies (80-82), and the involvement of trustees in academic policy matters (1984). More recently I was on the advisory committee of a study of political intrusion into state universities. The book by Frank Newman, entitled, Choosing Quality: Reducing Conflict Between the State and the University, was published in 1987.

The topic of political intrusion is a quite sensitive one -- even the terminology intrusion is politically loaded. My early reaction to the whole topic of intrusion was much like Ken Ashworth's:

As much as we might like to disbelieve allegations of intrusion of states upon university prerogatives, Frank Newman has now opened his chamber of horrors. Seeing what can actually happen should serve as a bulwark against additional unwarranted invasions of proper and essential university functionings. This frightening wax museum gives little shivers of deja vu. (1987, p III).

It seems to me that the debate in which we currently find ourselves is slightly different than the debate in which I have participated for the last two decades.

First, I would hope we have gone past the debate about the ideal types of autonomy versus academic freedom into a more relativistic framework that is reflected in Berdahl's discussions about substantive and procedural autonomy.

A major source of current friction is that many academics are trying to protect too much, and many persons in state government are trying to claim too much. A fundamental cause of this confusion is the failure of persons on both sides to recognize that academic freedom and university autonomy, though related, are not synonymous, and that university-state relations in one area may quite properly differ from those in the other (1971, p.5).

The distinctions of procedural autonomy continued to plague Berdahl's investigation and are the subject of much of the discussion about state-level policy that has emerged since the early 1970's. Again, Berdahl disagreed with state officials who maintained that some of these procedural controls are necessary safeguards. They might be marginal, but he argued they are usually purchased at too high a price to institutional effectiveness. Put simply, the nuisance factors are too high.

One of the fundamental arguments today, is whether there is a real separation between procedural and substantive autonomy. The tension is reflected in Jim Mingle's (1983) work on management flexibility, and Frank Newman's on political intrusion.

Jim Mingle's book covers cases that deal with the procedural controls which Berdahl in his 1971 study tended to regard merely as a hindrance to good management, but not likely to affect the substantive issues in higher education. Frank Bowen and Lyman Glenny looking at the issue in 1977, were less sure and suggested that the cumulative effect of controls on some state institutions was beginning to influence substantive autonomy.

The case today is even stronger. There is an emerging consensus in several reports and in the discussions among leaders in higher education that the combined effects of all these intrusions -- procedural, bureaucratic, and now political, is affecting substantive autonomies, and that we need a major effort to redress some of these imbalances.

Intrusion, almost by definition, is not appropriate public policy. Inappropriate intrusion is characterized by attempts by those in state government (or the university) to interfere with the operation of the university either to serve ends that are questionable in themselves or to serve ends that may or may not be questionable through means that are questionable.

There are three basic types of intrusion that are discussed in Newman's report. The first is bureaucratic intrusion which refers to the overregulation of activities for reasons that are usually legitimate, but by means that ultimately interfere with the ability of the university to perform its functions in a timely, efficient and creative manner. It is the accumulated weight of unnecessary or counterproductive regulations.

Ideological intrusion represents the attempt to interfere with the affairs of the university by preventing or insisting upon an activity strictly on ideological grounds. The examples here are the furor over the showing of "Hail Mary" on campus, or attempts by right-wing politicians to get faculty members dismissed for excessive liberal teachings.

The final type of intrusion is political intrusion which covers those cases in which interference and the decision to enhance the political interest of someone or some group in state government occurs. The example here is the attempt to have someone hired on a patronage basis or to locate a building at a site that is neither in the university's nor the state's best interests, but may serve the interest of a particular state official. It is the exercise of raw political power for self-interest.

The fundamental issue is reflected in Frank Newman's judgment as follows:

"While our attention has been primarily focused on the nature of the academic core and the factors that effect it directly, our considered opinion is that to the degree that the university and the state find themselves in an ineffectual relationship on issues outside the core, it will ultimately affect the functioning of the academic core as well." (1987, p 35)

The issue then is that matters of bureaucratic and political intrusion affect the very definition of what are legitimate areas of responsibility for the state to control and those that ought to be left to the institution. Effectively, the argument is that these forms of intrusion inhibit the ability of institutions to perform their academic missions and to the extent to which that is true we need to engage in a serious redressing of that imbalance.

There are several points that need to be addressed, in order to get a more comprehensive view of the situation. The first is best phrased as a question.

Why shouldn't universities be administered like state agencies?

For years we have believed that nuisances, that is excessive regulation, are not intrusions into substantive matters. This is no longer the case.

There is, of course, the argument that greater flexibility or autonomy will help universities deliver more effective management. A classic case of this is the management of year-end money, which in state bureaucracies has to be spent before the end of the year. In one situation, this year-end spending was eliminated, and units have been able to carry over or bank money. A number of units now have two or three percent of their money carried over from year to year to use it in more effective educational purposes.

This is a management issue and could reasonably apply to all state agencies. In other words, the question remains -- Why should an institution of higher education be treated any differently from any other state agency?

My second point is more in the form of an observation and follows from the first. Some institutions simply do not know what they would do with more flexibility or autonomy if they had it.

Several times in the last few years, I have asked administrators and faculty in three separate states what would be different if they had more autonomy. In one case the leader of a state-wide planning effort argued that when the question was put to the state universities being reviewed, there was no consistent answer. He concluded that the subject was not worth even bringing to his commission, let alone trying to bring some language before the legislature.

Third, boards of trustees often operate too much as conduits for political pressures rather than buffers against it. The basic list of trustee responsibilities varies with the author, but they all seem to agree that how to interpret the institution to its many publics is one of them. This usually refers to the role of the board as a buffer between excessive external interference in internal matters.

Frankly, the performance of public boards here is very uneven. There have been cases such as in Maine where the chairman of the board of trustees told the governor that it would be inappropriate for the board to resign to reflect the most recent election. And there are many other situations where stalwart trustees show courageous resistance to inappropriate attempts to influence university affairs.

Public institutions are operating in times of fiscal stress and are being pushed to open the doors of access even wider. The push for greater access calls into question whether there will be an erosion of quality that some fear must accompany declining

resources. This debate is difficult for academe because there are basic differences in the way we talk about quality.

Consider first three quite different conceptions of quality. Astin (1985) summarized two traditional views of quality, labeled the reputational and the resource views. The reputational view equates excellence with an institution's relative prestige (based, for example, on national surveys). The resource view is based on test scores of entering freshmen, the number of Merit Scholars, the number of faculty members in the National Academy of Science, the amount of expenditures per students, and so on. However, Astin argued that these two traditional views do not serve us well, because they are not based on the fundamental purpose of higher education: the education of students.

For this reason, Astin argued for a third definition of quality based on educational effectiveness. A high quality education, in this third view, is one which maximizes the intellectual and personal development of students. The ultimate test of how well an institution performs would, by this definition, depend not on the characteristics of students admitted, but rather on their intellectual and personal development while they are students. A community college with an open-door mission may well be providing a better education than a selective college whose average SAT scores for entering freshmen are much higher. The key judgment about a quality education must be made after students enroll, not before. Further, this judgment should reflect the diversity of institutional clientele and mission. The evaluation of the quality of education should not rely primarily on the attributes of students admitted to an institution.

The debate over how to define quality is closely related to the issue of access, and at the national level, one can argue that higher education in the United States has chosen to support access at the expense of quality. For example, Astin stated that although research shows that "student involvement and development are enhanced by living on campus, attending a four-year rather than a two-year institution, and attending a small rather than a large institution, the major trends in American higher education since World War II have all been in the opposite direction. That is, the proportion of commuter students has increased, two-year colleges have proliferated, and institutions have grown steadily larger." In essence, through the economies inherent in large campuses and non-residential community colleges, colleges and universities have been able to provide access -- but only at the expense of the quality of educational experience.

Similarly, the Southern Regional Education Board noted:

There is no question that the quality of undergraduate education is unacceptably low and needs to be raised...the reasons for the decline in the quality of undergraduate education are understandable. Chief among them was the pressure, beginning in the 1960's, for improved access to higher education for large numbers of students...(1985, p.2).

That report also noted that the issue of access has dominated higher education policy in the United States since the 1960's, and that quality -- discussed in terms of admission requirements, standards for graduation, methods of assessing student progress, rigorous course and degree standards, and the like -- became a secondary concern. The emphasis on educational opportunity is consistent with the value placed in the United States upon higher education as a means to promote equity, economic betterment, and social justice.

The task is to place the discussion of quality and access within the context of institutional responses to environmental turmoil.

I have argued elsewhere that in the United States, higher education is today poised at a potential shift point, and that we must be prepared to respond strategically to environmental challenges. Institutional experiences have shown that colleges and universities are learning that strategic choice, properly conceived, can lead to positive steps for a campus, even in a chaotic and sometimes hostile environment.

As noted, the United States has a long-standing commitment to access to higher education. A report of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities decries serious problems of adult illiteracy, high school dropout rates, minority underachievement, and inadequate federal support for higher education, and suggests that many of these are reflective of inadequate educational opportunities. The objectives of the "Marshall Plan" recommended by that report address, in essence, issues of access. For example, one of the objectives that at least 35 percent of American adults should have a college degree by the year 2001.

At the same time, others, as we have noted, have spoken strongly on the need for improved quality. Both sides of the argument are well-taken and persuasively made. In the end, we are left with a series of dilemmas: What price is society willing to pay for quality? Who will pay? What do institutions trade-off in terms of autonomy and control as they attempt to keep costs under

control yet insure quality programs? Given the historical import of access in American higher education, quality cannot be increased by simply tightening admission standards -- so how can we access and quality be integrated as policy objectives?

I close with three basic questions about the quality-access debate and its relationship to economic considerations:

What is quality, and how can it be measured in all of its diversity?

To what extent are concerns about quality in competition with demands to increase access for under-represented or under-served portions of the populace?

How can resource allocation decisions ensure improvement in educational quality, and how can they make programs and institutions more responsive to external demands for accountability?

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